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TELEGRAM

June 25, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 3037 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: ETRD, SOCI, SCUL, BTIO, EAID, PGOV, KPAO
Captions: None
Subject: UAE MEPI COUNTRY STRATEGY
Ref: None

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 03037

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CXABU:
ACTION: PAO
INFO: ECON DCM POL AMB
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ACTION: PAO

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0625
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 003037

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/RA; NEA/PPD; ARP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: KPAO ETRD SOCI SCUL BTIO EAID PGOV
SUBJECT: UAE MEPI COUNTRY STRATEGY

REFS: A) STATE 126550; B) ABU DHABI 000325;
C) ABU DHABI 00497

11. SUMMARY: Following is the UAE's country strategy for MEPI, which has been developed by PA and coordinated with POL and ECON. This includes long-term goals, specific objectives, suggested mechanisms by which goals could be realized, and a request for funding for two UAE-specific projects. END SUMMARY.

12. Economic reform:

GOAL: Enhance the UAE's global competitiveness through support for its integration into the global economy:

Objectives: Assist the UAE to comply with its WTO obligations

and to actively participate in WTO fora; support trade-related institution-building;

Mechanisms: Conduct targeted WTO seminars and training;

GOAL: Judicial Reform: Foster transparency and consistency in legal proceedings and rendition of judgments;

Objectives: Educate UAE judges and prosecutors on more efficient court administration and case management and sensitize them on key legal issues, including prevailing norms on protection of intellectual property rights;

Mechanisms: Encourage active participation by Ministry of Justice officials and judges in the future Judicial Training Institute in Manama; encourage attendance by high-level MOJ officials at the upcoming Judicial Reform Forum in Manama; invite MOJ officials to attend IV programs on court administration and case management; engage with MOJ's Judicial Training Institute, Dubai Justice Department's Judicial Training Institute and the UAE Jurists Association on possible training or exchanges.

GOAL: Address looming problem of unemployment among young nationals, which has negative implications for national stability;

Objectives: Foster entrepreneurship among nationals, especially women;

Mechanisms: Support existing and future programs to train nationals for private sector employment; Support existing women's business associations and programs that provide practical skills training and foster entrepreneurship among women; establish Arab Businesswomen or US-UAE Businesswomen network or mentoring program.

13. Political Reform:

GOAL: Encourage broader political participation, particularly by women, and strengthen civil society.

Objectives: Expand and strengthen the role of NGOs and the media sector in the UAE; support training for members of the Federal National Council (FNC) and the elected councils in Dubai which will serve as the grassroots model for broader political participation in the UAE; enhance the professionalism and independence of both local and regional media in the UAE, which is fast becoming a major regional media hub;

Mechanisms: We recommend initiatives, particularly regional projects, directed to women and NGOS through such tools as citizens' exchanges, International visitor programs, and programs such as MEET. We also recommend that MEPI look to organize training workshops for media. Post has conducted some recently with great success. Journalists here welcome the opportunity to improve their skills and professionalism. Dubai represents an excellent location in which to conduct such workshops for the entire region.

SPECIFIC PROJECT REQUEST: The appointed Federal National Council has requested that we organize a visit to the US in October 2003 for eight persons, four FNC members and four staffers, to learn about the operation of federal and state legislatures. This is an unprecedented request and would provide an opening to strengthen the role of the FNC as an advocacy body for public concerns. Post requests that the MEPI office arrange for a US-based organization to take on the logistical and planning arrangements for this project. We note that this is an unprecedented opportunity to effect some change in the traditionally static FNC. A proposal will be sent septel.

14. Education Reform:

GOAL: Help the UAE modernize its education system and curricula.

Objectives: Train a work force with skills applicable to today's job market; Help the UAE promote an atmosphere of tolerance and moderation in its school curricula and system;

Mechanisms: Curriculum revision and updating; Teacher training, including training for teachers on how to teach revised curricula, how to employ critical thinking and IT in the classroom; English language training for teachers in K-12; Accreditation: how to set standards for accreditation. (NOTE: Because of its multi-cultural population, the UAE has at least 16 different kinds of school systems. US accreditation standards are of particular interest and importance here. END NOTE)

SPECIFIC PROJECT REQUEST: Post requests a grant of \$41,000 to award locally to Zayed University's School for the Professional Development of UAE Educators to conduct workshops for UAE educators to improve the teaching methodology of national teachers in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. A more detailed proposal will be sent septel.

15. COMMENT and REQUEST: As MEPI has begun to take shape, and we have had time to reflect upon how we might best apply it here, we have come to the realization that our strategy must be two-pronged: both regional and local. Post will participate in the many regional programs - both MEPI and P4L - now underway or in planning. There are however, many opportunities which offer themselves within the UAE which we cannot take advantage of without access to direct and flexible funding. In the last six months, we have reached out to a wide range of UAE institutions to seek them as partners and stakeholders with us in implementing MEPI projects. These include the universities, the ministries, the Emirates News Agency, judicial training institutes, and others. We seek to empower these local partners and to draw them fully into the MEPI process, and they are eager to participate. They alone have the expertise to reach deep into the local community and engage a wider range of Emiratis. Post requests therefore that a small-grants program be added to the MEPI arsenal of tools available to us, grants of up to \$50,000 or \$100,000 which can be awarded by posts through an agreed-upon mechanism. All PAOs have grant authority which would allow them to draft and issue grants at post. END COMMENT and REQUEST

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